

Fullerton, William Young

Christ in Africa.

Div.Sch.
BR
1360
.F855
1900z

DUKE
UNIVERSITY



DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY

Torch-Bearer Booklets

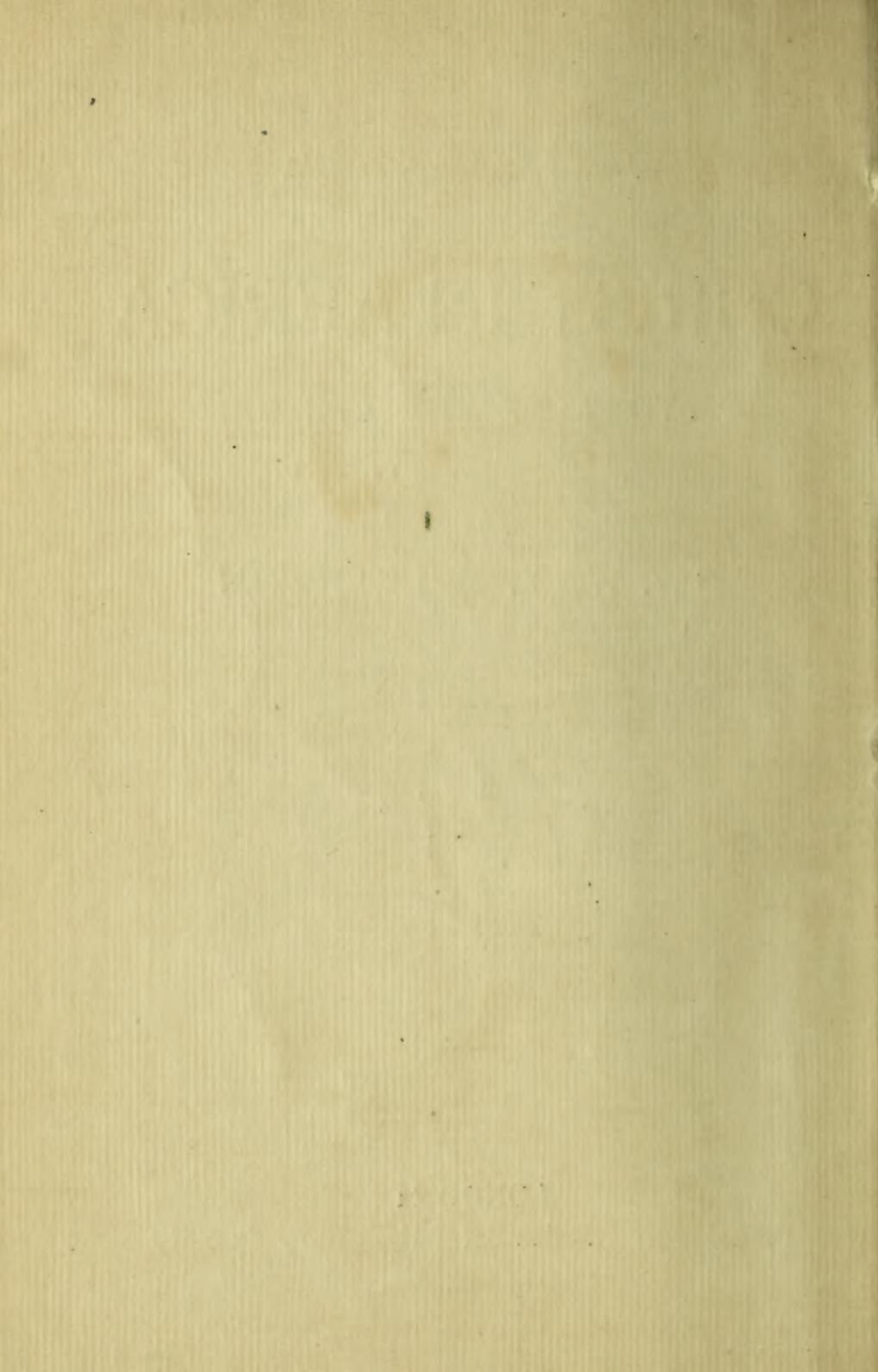
CHRIST IN AFRICA

A STORY OF THE CENTURIES

REV. W. Y. FULLERTON



LONDON :
Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society



CHRIST IN AFRICA

A STORY OF THE CENTURIES

BY THE REV.

W. Y. FULLERTON

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF PITCAIRN ISLAND," "THE PRACTICE
OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE," ETC., ETC.

LONDON :

WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY
SOCIETY,

7 Carlisle Avenue, Aldgate, E.

Div. Sch.
276
F971
C554
1900z

CONTENTS.

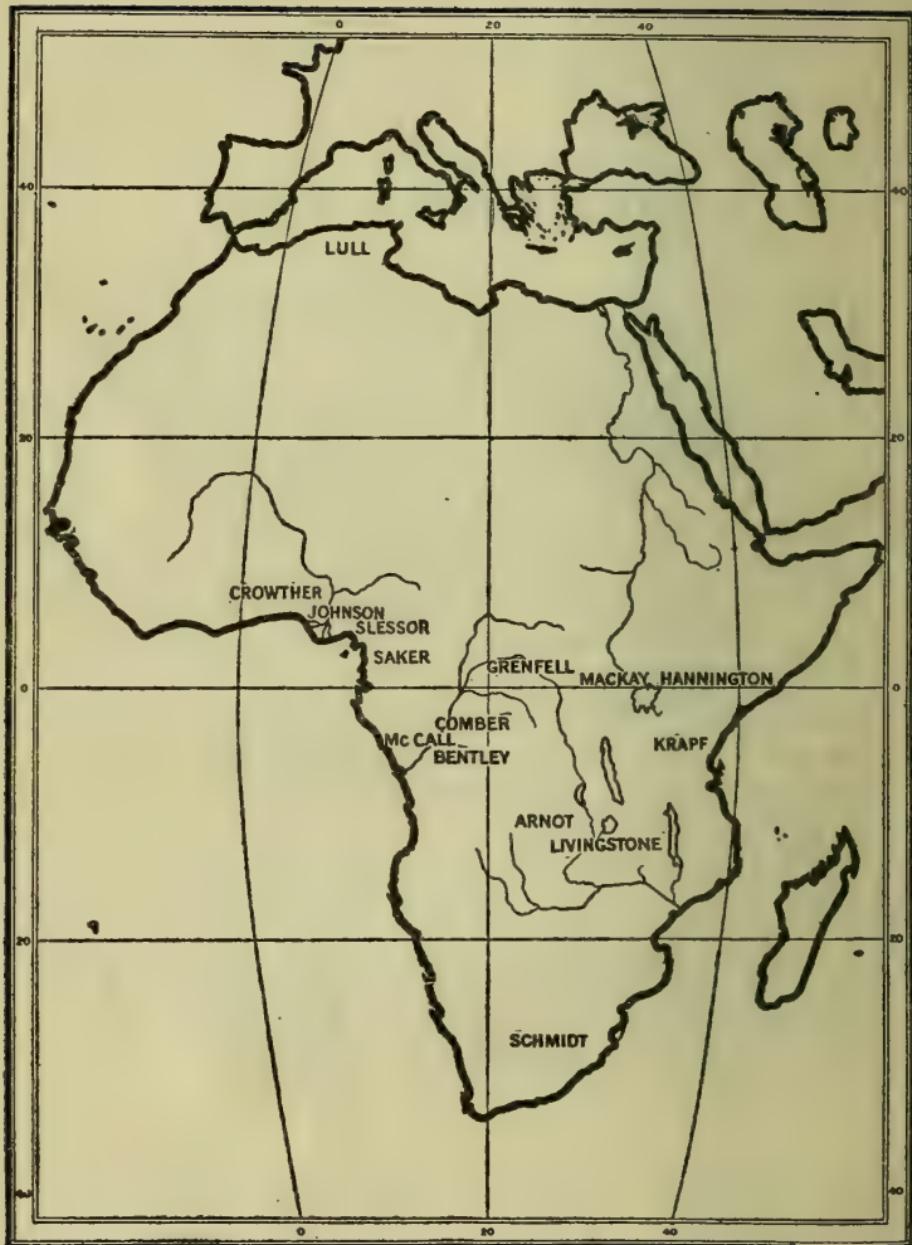
CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY NOTE.	
I. ANCIENT AFRICA	7
II. NORTH AFRICA TO-DAY	10
III. THE TRANSITION	13
IV. THREE PIONEERS	15
V. THE CROSS IN AFRICA	18
VI. WEST AFRICA	23
VII. AFRICA SEEKING GOD	29
VIII. EAST AFRICA	32
IX. THE GREAT QUEST	35
X. THE CONGO RIVER	39
XI. THE PRICE AND THE PRIZE	42

		1877
1.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	I
2.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	II
3.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	III
4.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	IV
5.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	V
6.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	VI
7.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	VII
8.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	VIII
9.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	IX
10.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	X
11.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XI
12.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XII
13.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XIII
14.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XIV
15.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XV
16.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XVI
17.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XVII
18.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XVIII
19.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XIX
20.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XX
21.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXI
22.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXII
23.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXIII
24.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXIV
25.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXV
26.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXVI
27.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXVII
28.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXVIII
29.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXIX
30.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXX
31.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXI
32.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXII
33.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXIII
34.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXIV
35.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXV
36.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXVI
37.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXVII
38.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXVIII
39.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XXXIX
40.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XL
41.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLI
42.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLII
43.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLIII
44.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLIV
45.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLV
46.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLVI
47.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLVII
48.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLVIII
49.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	XLIX
50.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	L
51.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LI
52.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LII
53.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LIII
54.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LIV
55.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LV
56.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVI
57.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
58.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
59.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
60.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
61.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
62.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
63.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
64.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
65.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
66.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
67.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
68.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
69.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
70.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
71.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
72.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
73.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
74.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
75.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
76.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
77.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
78.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
79.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
80.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
81.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
82.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
83.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
84.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
85.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
86.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
87.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
88.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
89.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
90.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
91.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
92.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
93.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
94.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
95.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
96.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX
97.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVII
98.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIII
99.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVIX
100.	W. H. C. & Co., Boston	LVX

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IF the life of Jesus in the flesh is the whole history of our Lord, then our sole record of Christ in Africa is to be found on the second page of the New Testament. But Christ is not to be judged only by those three and thirty wonderful years in Palestine, but by the whole era of His activity as Saviour. He has been working all along the centuries. He is King of the Ages and King of the Earth. Absent but for the ten days after His ascension, He has been with His saints, by the Spirit, since Pentecost, and He is our great contemporary to-day. When we speak, therefore, of Christ in Africa we speak not only of what was, but of what is. Beautiful are His feet as He marches through the continent, and triumphant is His challenge as He speaks to its myriad peoples.

If Christ Incarnate claimed Africa in His flight to Egypt, Christ Crucified laid hold of Africa when one of its sons was compelled to bear His cross after Him, and Christ Glorified won entrance when the eunuch of Ethiopia believed that the Man of Sorrows was the Son of God, and, being baptized, went home rejoicing.



CHRIST IN AFRICA

I

ANCIENT AFRICA.

THE dwellers in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene doubtless took the message of Pentecost, in which they shared, back to their own lands, and the legends of the early Church assure us that John Mark and Philip the Evangelist preached the word of grace in Egypt. Whoever were the agents, it is clear that the progress of the Gospel in Asia and Europe was paralleled by its conquests in Africa. If Africa afterwards became the dark continent, it once glowed with the light of the Evangel. In the fifth century there were no less than five hundred and sixty bishoprics along its northern shores, and so firmly was the Christian faith rooted amongst the people that it took Islam three centuries to extirpate it.

Here is the most awful warning of the whole era to the Christian Church. Where Christ was, Christ ceased to be. Save only for the feeble glimmer amongst the Copts and in Abyssinia, the light was quenched. It is not difficult to trace the reason. The Church in North Africa decayed because it ceased to be a Missionary Church ; it felt no obligation to take the Gospel to the people behind the desert, so it turned on itself, as all Churches which cease to reach out to the regions beyond are sure to do ; its life ran low, abuses crept in, its early simplicity was lost, and God allowed the Moslem hordes to sweep it away.

This is now our nearest non-Christian field. It may startle you to be told that it is possible for a minister to take his Sunday evening service in England, and his Wednesday evening service in North Africa, so accessible is it geographically, though so remote in enlightenment. The memories of its former glories should encourage us to hope that its candlestick may yet be replaced, and its proximity to Europe lays upon us a responsibility we cannot evade.

We recall the great names that lend lustre to the Africa of the early days. Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, two of the most

eminent teachers ever given to the Church ; Athanasius, that brave man who stood against the attempt to rob Christ of His Deity—*Athanasius contra mundum*, whose name is without authority attached to one of the creeds ; Pantænus, the first missionary to India ; and many more, have left worthy records in Egypt's northern city.

Carthage, too, has its famous scroll—Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine, its great trinity. It is true that Cyprian crystallised the sacerdotal thought of the Church into a system which, perhaps, has wrought more mischief than can be annulled by his martyrdom, glorious as it was. But his memory shines with a rare lustre still. “I will not sacrifice,” he said, when asked to acknowledge heathen gods. And when the Pro-Consul urged him to consider again, he answered : “In so righteous a question there is no room for reflection.” His words of triumph, “Thanks be to God,” as he passed onward, assure us that Christ was in Cyprian as he spoke—Christ in Africa. Of Augustine, saint and apostle, the same is true, his “Confessions” and his “City of God” being sufficient witness. Time fails to tell of Perpetua and Felicitas, martyrs of Carthage, or of Salsa, the little maid, whose name and record at Tipasa by the sea supply

us with the only certain site of a martyr grave in all the northern land.

II

NORTH AFRICA TO-DAY.

Before turning to the Continent as a whole, let us finish the story of North Africa. When the Moslem overran all Mauritania until in the utmost west, in his eagerness for full conquest, he spurred his horse into the Atlantic waves, darkness settled on the land until Raymond Lull, "the Henry Martyn of the Middle Ages," at the end of the thirteenth century, sought to take the Gospel to its people. Converted by a vision of Jesus while composing a song as a rejected lover, he yielded all his life to the great rejected Lover of souls who appeared to him as on the Cross. The preaching of a friar led him to attempt the apparently impossible task of taking the Gospel across the Mediterranean. "He who loves not, lives not; He who lives by the Life cannot die," was his motto, and though he was stoned to death at Bona in Africa, he lived in the chairs of Oriental learning he had founded in Europe, in

the Universities of Oxford, Paris and Salamanca ; in his writings which bear the title, " Beati Raymundi Lulli, Doctoris Illuminati et Martyris Opera " ; and in the inspiration he gave to the missions of all time. Had the Church of Christ been ready for it when he went out on his quest, he might have taken the place given to Carey exactly five hundred years later.

During the fourteenth century others followed in his steps. Two hundred and fifty Franciscan missionaries were murdered by African Moslems, and the Dominicans gave almost as many of their number to death for Christ's sake. We oppose the Papacy as the very antithesis of what our Lord meant His Church to be, and yet may not withhold our admiration from Christ's people, who, in spite of the system, offer to Him such rare and beautiful devotion.

Cardinal Lavigerie's statue at Biskra stands facing the desert, that " Garden of Allab," as the statue of Gordon faces it at Khartoum, both looking to see Christ making the wilderness blossom as the rose. In recent years he organised his White Fathers with the express purpose of carrying the Gospel into the Sahara, and, in order to reach the Arabs of North Africa for Christ, founded " The Order of

Geronimo." To those who know the story, the very name should be an inspiration. Geronimo was a humble Kabyle who dared to witness for Christ whom he realised as his Saviour, and as a consequence was actually built into the masonry of the fort at Algiers on September 18th, 1569. In 1853 the cavity where his body had lain was discovered, and the cast of the martyr, lying face downwards, was taken. The contour of the face and head is so clearly discernible that, as I have stood beside it at Mustapha Supérieur, and gazed long, I seemed almost to have so seen the man himself that I could recognise him in a crowd. But his country had yet to wait long for the light. In these northern provinces to-day happily Christ is again known, and honoured in many lives through the witness of the missionaries who have borne His Gospel along the shores of the Littoral.

III

THE TRANSITION.

But to return. Henry the Navigator and others who ventured during the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth centuries to sail down the West Coast of Africa, opened the way in which the Jesuit missionaries followed, as far as the Congo, where they baptized many. But thereafter darkness settled on the continent, darkness that continued for centuries. Early knowledge of the interior was lost, Africa became no-man's land, and the myriads who inhabited it were cut off from the rest of the world as surely as if they had never existed. The coast tribes were known, but it was their interest to keep all the trade of the interior in their own hands, so they ever opposed the entrance of the white man, even when he made the attempt to enter over their narrow, circuitous paths, which owing to the prevailing malaria in the lower levels of the continent nearer the sea was but seldom.

In later years the white man has, however, effectually succeeded in enforcing his dominion ; he has taken Africa from the Africans. In those earlier years, not to be denied, he took

the Africans from Africa, and it is one of the ironies of history that the first ship which carried black slaves across the Atlantic was named "The Jesus." Thus began that long agony under which millions of Africa's dark sons have suffered the unimaginable horrors of the slave raids, the unnameable cruelties of the ocean passage, and the unspeakable degradations of a life of bondage in other lands. But, as one of their own proverbs puts it: "The African race is an indiarubber ball, the harder you dash it to the ground the higher it will rise." Dreadful as was this trade in men and women, it broke down at length the barrier which kept the world from the heart of Africa. If the first thing that attracted the trader was the African himself, the next was the elephant, which provided the ivory he coveted, and so the trader became the hunter. The discovery of the almost inexhaustible stores of ivory quickened the traffic in men, for "slaves were needed to buy ivory with, then many slaves had to be stolen to carry it. So living man himself became the commercial currency of Africa. He is locomotive, he is easily acquired, and he is immediately negotiable." Commercial instincts aroused, the trader was not slow to discover the palm tree, which yielded the precious oil, nor

the rubber vine which dropped riches into his hand. But still the traffic in souls continued, is barely checked to-day, and Africa waited the emancipating touch of Christ.

IV

THREE PIONEERS.

The first modern missionary was George Schmidt, and he was a Moravian. Six days after the appeal came to Hernnhut for someone to take the Gospel to South Africa, he was on his way; and on March 31st, 1742, the first of the countless host that is to be redeemed from the continent was baptized. The opposition aroused by the baptism of Hottentots was so great that the missionary was forced to leave the country. The European settlers, who not infrequently inscribed over their doors, "Dogs and Hottentots not admitted," could not countenance the admission of these "lesser breeds" into the Church. So Schmidt returned to his own land, and at Niesky, on the first day of August, 1785, he was found in his room, dead on his knees.

In later years another pioneer reached the continent. John Ludwig Krapf, in 1837, went

to Egypt and Abyssinia, and seven years afterwards, forcing his way south, reached Mombasa on the East Coast. Within six months he dug two graves—one for his wife, the other for his child. Dr. Eugene Stock says truly that nothing more touching has ever been written than his diary of the next seven days. To Europe he sent the message :—

“ Tell our friends at home that there is now on the East African coast a lonely missionary grave. This is a sign that you have commenced the struggle with this part of the world, and as the victories of the Church are gained by stepping over the graves of her members, you may be the more convinced that the hour is at hand when you are summoned to the conversion of Africa from its eastern shore.”

His hope was fulfilled in 1874, when land for a church was purchased hard by his wife's grave; was fulfilled more amply when the cathedral at Zanzibar was actually erected on the site of the former slave market. He had as companion the heroic Rebmann, who for twenty-nine years lived in East Africa, at last blind and in a miserable hut, refusing to return until someone should take his place.

It was he who first announced to the incredulous world the existence of snow-covered mountains near the equator, and when scorn was poured on his romantic statement, he quietly replied that having spent his youth in Switzerland he knew a snow mountain when he saw it.

But Krapf had visions, not of white mountains but of souls washed white who might soar to the heights of God. He it was who first prophesied that there would be a chain of mission stations right across Africa, and a "Pilgrim Mission," with an "Apostle Street," having twelve stations named after the apostles, running north and south. Both of his dreams have in our own day become practical realities, the first by the advance of the Congo Mission to the Lualaba, the second by the stations which in effect join Uganda to Khartoum. On November 25th, 1881, at Kornthal, Krapf, too, died on his knees.

Now we come to the greatest name in African annals—David Livingstone. You will remember how as April merged into May in the year 1873, wearied by his abundant labours he came to Ilala, in the very heart of Africa, crept into a hut, and as he knelt beside his bed, with the rain dropping from the eaves, and the candle guttering in the socket, his soul sped

to God. Like the others, he, too, died on his knees. The voices of these three African pioneers call to us that Africa is only to be won as we pray for it ; that the Church of Christ here, as everywhere, can only advance on its knees.

V

THE CROSS IN AFRICA.

One other thing they taught us, that success can only be gained by the power of the Cross. Speaking to a company of Methodist preachers in America, Stanley, to whom Livingstone owed no greater debt than he to Livingstone, said :—

“ If you look at the illustration of his route you will see that it is the rude figure of a cross. And now you may be able to draw the moral. This lone missionary went on and on until he had drawn the rude figure of a cross in the Continent of Africa, and then he said with his dying words : ‘ All I can add in my loneliness is “ May heaven’s richest blessing come down on every one —American, English, Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world.” ’ And

the Cross turns not back. The open sore will be healed. Africa will be redeemed."

All this was evidenced in those who preceded Livingstone, no less than in those who came after him—in brave Robert Moffat and his no less intrepid wife Mary ; in Vanderkemp, who laid the foundation for all future missionary enterprise in South Africa ; in James Stewart, Livingstone's friend, who subsequently founded "Lovedale," where hundreds of Africans have been trained to preach the Gospel ; in Robert Laws, of Livingstonia ; in Coillard among the Barotse ; and in scores of others who in the life of Livingstone found the impulse for their own. That bent figure in Ilala, unable to go further, inspired a score of forward movements. Christ went on in Africa when He found men willing to bear His Cross after Him.

The missions in the Shiré highlands, at Blantyre, in Nyassa, on the Zambesi, were the product of his life. But the man who perhaps most literally followed in his steps was F. Stanley Arnot, who, unaided, tramped across the dreaded Kalahari desert, and did not rest till he founded the mission in what is now known as the Katanga copper country ; the mission afterwards joined by Dan Crawford, whose emergence, after twenty-two years in

the “long grass,” has enabled us to estimate something of the genius and wonder and sacrifice of the evangelical adventure.

To estimate that adventure is difficult for us who stay at ease at home. Let three extracts from the African story, told in as many records, each be like a lens, which together may serve as a telescope to make real to us that which else is distant and indistinct. Arnot, in his “Missionary Travels,” tells us how in true apostolic fashion he began :—

“The season for travelling to the Zambesi was now nearly over. As a poor man I could not attempt the route *via* the Matabele country, where the chiefs were accustomed to big presents. Kama offered me the loan of his wagon to take me by the desert route as far as Mababe Flats. So I bought three donkeys for the transport of my belongings beyond the Mababi, and although my outfit was small, yet at the time it seemed sufficient. One suit of clothes, one knife, fork and spoon, one plate, cup, some soap, beads, calico, wheatmeal, tea, sugar, coffee, a little powder and lead, and all packed comfortably into six sailor bolster bags that a Glasgow sailmaker made for me. But, above all, after reading Ephesians v. 25-29, an

overpowering sense of the sufficiency of Jesus' love so steeled every muscle and nerve of my body that I felt I could go anywhere and do anything that I believed He had called me to do—supplies or no supplies."

Dan Crawford lifts the curtain for a moment from a bit of the after-history of the Mission :—

"The extraordinary insalubrity of the Luvale Flats is appalling. In later days it was in these sweltering places that Cyril Bird and brave young Copethorne poured out their lives for Luvaleland. Characteristically and cardinally men of deep love for souls, they gave their all to a tribe that listened for years to the Gospel with antagonistic ears. Once Bird left for the ocean, ostensibly to take a much-needed furlough, but the haunting need of that vile Luvaleland dragged him back, and the end was soon reached, life like a spent steed panting towards its goal, the Pauline gleam in his eye, and praise on his lips. Blackwater fever they called his mortal malady, but he died of a broken heart, yes, broken for a tribe of robbers—a holiday at last, furlough and glory! Weary and worn by the vertical

rays, what a whiff of joy in the thought :
‘ Heaven’s ahead ! Hurrah ! ’ ”

Henry Drummond, in “ Tropical Africa,” in unforgettable words tells of the same spirit of the Cross in another Mission not greatly distant on the map :—

“ In a few hours we were at anchor in the little bay of Livingstonia. My first impressions of the famous mission-house will never be forgotten. Magnificent mountains of granite, green to the summit with forest, encircled it, and on the silver sand of a still smaller bay stood the small row of trim white cottages. A neat path through a small garden led to the settlement, and I approached the largest house and entered. It was the Livingstonia manse—the head missionary’s house. It was spotlessly clean. English furniture in every room, a medicine chest, familiar-looking dishes were in the cupboards, books lying about—but there was no missionary in it. I went to the next house—it was the school ; the benches were there, and the blackboard, but there were no scholars, and no teacher. I passed to the next—it was the blacksmith’s shop ; there were the tools and the anvil, but there

was no blacksmith. And so on to the next and the next, and the next, all in perfect order, and all empty. . . . Then a native approached and led me a few yards into the forest, and there among the mimosa trees, under a huge granite mountain, were four or five graves. These were the missionaries."

* * * * *

Britain, without intending it, has almost painted a huge red cross on the map of Africa. Almost. There is a break in one of the arms, but the Church of Christ must not pause till the Cross of Christ is laid on Africa's heart.

The left arm of the geographical cross runs out to Sierra Leone and the Niger territory, and we pass now from South Africa thither.

VI

WEST AFRICA.

"Any attempt at evangelization in Western Africa," says Bishop Ingham, "that neglects to make use of this excellent basis, or ignores the possibilities of Sierra Leone, will miss its mark." It is interesting that in the very year the Baptist Missionary Society had birth,

this colony was founded to be a home in Africa for freed slaves. An official chaplain was appointed for those who were repatriated, but the formal services he rendered did not meet the need of the people, and some of the Africans who had met the Methodists in Nova Scotia attempted themselves to preach and pray. The call for missionaries had its earliest response from those who had sent forth Carey to India, and two missionaries, Grigg and Rodway, were sent by the Baptist Missionary Society to Sierra Leone. The Mission was unfortunately short lived ; political discussions made an end of it, and it was reserved for the Church Missionary Society, which significantly was founded to promote missions "in Africa and the Far East," to take the Gospel to this region.

The story of A. B. Johnson, who, as a workman in a sugar refinery in Whitechapel, heard the call of the negro, and gave seven years of flaming zeal to the colony, is one of the great chapters of missions. It seemed as if Pentecost were repeated. One day—April 11th, 1819—he baptised one hundred and ten persons, and thousands professed conversion under his ministry. Such scenes have often been witnessed since in missionary service, but then the experience was new ; the news of it thrilled the Church of God, and Sierra Leone, though

it became known as the white man's grave, was also recognised to be the black man's resurrection.

Here was trained the negro who became the first African bishop, and the link between Sierra Leone and the great Niger country. Sold in his boyhood as a slave, Samuel Crowther was permitted again to see his people at Abeokuta. He shall himself describe the pathetic scene :—

“ My mother, from whom I was torn twenty-five years ago, came with my brother in quest of me. When she saw me she trembled. She could not believe her own eyes. We grasped one another, looking at each other in silence and great astonishment, big tears rolling down her emaciated cheeks. She trembled as she held my hand, and called me by familiar names by which I well remember I used to be called by my grandmother, who has since died in slavery. We could not say much, but sat still and cast now and then an affectionate look at each other—a look which violence and oppression had long checked—an affection which had nearly been extinguished by the long space of twenty-five years. Thus unsought for, after all search for me had failed, God brought

us together again, and turned our sorrow into joy."

Who will deny that in that day when mother and son met, Christ was in Africa; and to turn all African sorrow into joy our Lord still lives, works miracles, and speaks words such as never man spake, in the great southern continent.

The discovery of ancient cities in the interior, such as Sokoto and Kano, where immense tribes of people have for centuries lived an ordered and industrial life, has been one of the great surprises of geographical discovery. How little Mungo Park dreamt of such development! But the heralds of the Cross are pressing into this Niger country, amongst the Fulah, Hausa, and other tribes, on to Lake Chad, and across the great Sudan to Abyssinia.

One of the most fascinating of African stories is that of the remarkable woman, who went to Calabar in 1876, and acquired such an influence over the people that for a district of two thousand square miles around her house at Okoyong she virtually ruled the country. When the Government sought to impose conditions on the people they answered, "If our mother will stay with her children till they can stand alone, they will

try to do what the white man wants." So this uncrowned queen stayed and guided the tribes that trusted her so utterly; presided over their native courts, rescued their captives, and stilled their wars, sometimes at the risk of her life. Miss Mary Mitchell Slessor, from her quiet life in Dundee, was called to spend herself for Africa, and her fame went through all Nigeria as "the good white Ma who lives alone."

Immediately south is the Cameroons, where early efforts were suddenly checked in 1884 by the descent of the Germans. With characteristic efficiency they carried it forward until in the early days of the Great War they were compelled to leave the country. Sir Harry Johnston, who is not a Baptist, but on this subject speaks with authority because he was there, writes but a short time ago :—

" On account of the truculence of the natives, the Cameroons coast remained a scarcely known region, until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then a great change took place. What men-of-war with cannon could not effect, humble missionaries brought about. The British Baptist Mission had established itself from about 1840 in the

island of Fernando Po, a Spanish possession, which also has a large mountain, and lies opposite to the Cameroons, about twenty miles distant. The other marvellous mountain seen across the narrow strait attracted their curiosity, and they soon despatched agents to found missionary stations on the mainland; not white men, but educated negroes from the West Indies, men actually remarkable at that time for their wide and sound education. Noteworthy amongst these Baptist pioneers was Joseph Merrick, a genius in African philology, who has laid us under a lasting debt by his dictionary of the Isubu tongue, a work quoted over and over again by students of Africa, and notably by German philologists.

"The West Indian missionaries were soon followed by white colleagues, and the real apostle of the Cameroons was Alfred Saker. I do not use the word with the emotional gush which often characterises missionaries' records, but in a sense which could be appreciated by all men and women of the world, whatever their religious beliefs or disbeliefs. Alfred Saker converted the Duala clans to real and permanent civilisation. The Cameroons—as I can testify in my experience of thirty years ago—became a country

safe for the harmless white man to travel in.

"Whatever happens as the result of the present war and the peace which must follow some day, the Western part of this huge German dominion—all bearing the name of 'Kamerun,' though it stretches to Lake Chad and the Congo basin—must return to the sceptre of Great Britain. The British Baptists must be invited to resume the work so well begun by Merrick, Saker, Fuller, and Grenfell."

Since those words were written a B.M.S. embassy has visited the country, but it has been found impossible to resume the work under British auspices. Happily, the French have been able to enter this promising field.

VII

AFRICA SEEKING GOD.

Here we may pause to ask whether God has left these teeming millions of people without any light all through the centuries. It is evident that they have been without Christ, and therefore without hope in the world, but

among them surely there must have been many elect souls who have felt after God. Mr. Dan Crawford gives an instance of a chief who had such a revelation of God that he sent an embassy to the neighbouring kingdom to tell of it. In his dream God spoke to him, commanding him to say who he was ; and the more he vaunted his titles the weaker he became, until God said He would make an end ; and the chief cried out, " King, no king am I, but a worthless slave. All kingship is Thine, and all power." Then strength flowed back into his body, and he awoke to proclaim the great God he had discovered. The missionary in making the record significantly adds : " In our zeal for God's written Word we are too apt to treat all this as a weird and doubtful business — mere misty dream — forgetful of the fact that God's own Book it is that declares, ' In a dream He openeth the ears of men.' Forgetful, finally, that God may speak to those to whom He does not write."

We are all familiar with the thought that when a man comes to Christ he gets to God. Perhaps we do not always remember our Lord's own words, that when a man has learned and heard of the Father he comes to Christ. In the experience of Saker there is an instance of a strange prevision that prepared the way

for the message of the Gospel. A chief named Quan frequented his meetings, and for long Mr. Saker failed to understand what attracted him, and wondered at his emotion as he listened. One day he told his story. When a boy he had once been out with his father fishing, and during a tornado the canoe was capsized on the river bar. As they clung to the canoe in the darkness and cold, the father urged Quan to be a better man than he had been himself, and added that some day a white man would come from over the sea to teach the good and the true way ; that for him it would be too late, but when this man came his son was to listen to the message. So was the way of the Lord prepared !

But the messengers of the Cross have been slow in coming, and all the time the followers of Mohammed have been surely winning their way South among the tribes. This indeed is the great peril in Africa to-day ; for while the teaching of the Koran may do something to raise savage peoples, it erects a formidable barrier to the teaching of the Gospel. Every Arab trader is a missionary of Islam, and sadly the record must be made that traders who come from countries bearing the name Christian are more often stumbling-blocks in the way of Christ. " You bring your God in a little book

115

and your devil in a black bottle," was the scornful verdict of an African on the efforts of the white man. Yet we see that though the Pagan enmity to God is reinforced by the Arabian heresy and by the European vice, the Spirit of the Highest broods over the chaos, and will yet bring the spirit of the black man to its destined goal.

In a very real sense, to use Tertullian's phrase, "the heart of man is naturally Christian." Something in him responds to the love revealed in Calvary. " Didn't I always tell you that there ought to be a God like that ? " exclaimed an old negress, turning to her tribe when she first heard the glad tidings. " Didn't I always tell you that there ought to be a God like that ? "

VIII

EAST AFRICA.

The second arm of that red cross on the map of which we spoke is on the other side of Africa, and covers Uganda, whose very name is almost a synonym for the triumph of the faith. From the first day when Stanley trans-

lated a gospel for King M'tesa until now, there has been a strange preparedness amongst the people for the message of Jesus Christ. Martyr fires have indeed been lighted, but only to sow martyr dust for the living harvest of the Church. Death here, as in other parts of Africa, has claimed heavy toll. At one time Mackay was the only missionary left, and when Hannington sought to open up the way for the Baganda the year after the martyrdoms he himself joined the martyr ranks.

The most notable event in all the romantic history of the Mission is the revival in 1893, when it seemed as if the whole work was in peril. "I was far happier in the old days," said one of the chiefs. "I get no benefit from my religion." And he declared his determination to return to heathen practices. But God visited his people, and Pilkington and others rejoiced in an outpouring of the Spirit of God which proved the reality of Pentecost, and was, in fact, part of its blessing. That very chieftain, instead of renouncing his religion, renounced all else to become a preacher of the message that brought him such joy, and continued to bring to his people so fine an exaltation of spirit from that day.

The Christian faith of the people of Uganda

henceforth stood not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. It is this supernaturalness of the work of Missions, constantly attested, which enables us to go on calmly with the enterprise even in the darkest days. In all human reckoning, it is Utopian to seek the conversion of the world, quixotic to expect the redemption of the Dark Continent, but, because we realise Christ in Africa by His Spirit, we believe that Ethiopia shall speedily stretch out her hands to God.

When Africa is Christ's possession the negro shall teach us the glory of burden-bearing in Christ's name, the might of patient endurance for Christ's sake, and the royalty of service for Christ's kingdom. It was Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, who took soft rags and tenderly drew Jeremiah from the dungeon in the olden time. The men of black skin who have themselves known the horrors of slavery are perhaps yet destined in these latter days to set God's prophets free to proclaim a world's emancipation.

Time fails to speak of other Missions that approach the continent from the East Coast ; of the work of the Methodists among the Gallas ; of the efforts of a devoted man at Ukamba, and the story he tells of the day when, surrounded by hostile tribes, he was

driven to God as His only defence, and as they prayed a meteor streamed across the sky and fell amongst the people, changing their enmity to veneration and loyalty ; of the inland missions in the heart of Africa, and others further south. From Uganda we may pass through the pigmy forest, following the track of that intrepid traveller, Albert Lloyd, in his great journey down the Aruwimi to the Congo River, along the banks of which from end to end the lamps of God now shine brightly in the darkness.

IX

THE GREAT QUEST.

Such a journey recalls the two great Congo names—Henry M. Stanley, the newspaper discoverer, and George Grenfell, the missionary explorer. Stanley's journey of nine hundred and ninety-nine days across Africa, where he emerged in 1877 from the Congo to tell the world of the river which is now known to be the longest river on earth, was scarcely over before the missionaries entered, George Grenfell amongst them. The long, patient years that

remained to him were thereafter given to the Congo people, in evangelization, organization, and exploration. Since his death the two books containing the charts of their rivers, beautifully drawn by his own hand, on the basis of which modern maps have been issued, have been accepted by the Royal Geographical Society as permanent treasures for their museum. The memory of this brave man as he went to and fro on the steamer *Peace* will always be the idyll of the river.

Two other of the pioneers were granted but a short service, but their names are imperishably written on Congo missionary annals—Adam McCall and Thomas Comber. Both had been in Africa before, the one as a hunter on the Zambesi, the other as a missionary in the Cameroons; both went gleefully, almost neck to neck, to their new task; both early finished their course.

It cannot be without interest to the Church of Christ in Leicester that it was from that town that McCall went as leader of the Livingstone Inland Mission to establish work on the Congo. In those early days death claimed its victims so frequently that every mail from the front was received at home with trembling and eagerly scanned to know who next had fallen, and before long one of the

missions which shares the honour of speedy response to the Congo call, was bereft of its leader. He reached Madeira on his homeward journey but to die. I have tried in vain to find there the house where he breathed his last, but the record of his fine devotion remains. "If it please Thee to take myself rather than my work," he said, "what is that to me? Thy will be done."

Thomas Comber, one of the family that has given no less than five of its members to Congo, lived a little longer; but he, too, received the summons when, in the hope of restoring health, he was on his way home. Off Mayumba, where he was afterwards buried, he breathed his last. Albert Edward Scrivener, who accompanied him, since himself called to higher service, listened to his dying words uttered in his last sleep :—

" O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love,
The streams on earth I've tasted ; " . . .

It was not until he was in his Master's presence that he finished the verse—

. . . " More deep I'll drink above."

The lives of the brave men and women who

perished in those days were not squandered. Deep they drink above of the joy of those who suffered with Christ and now reign with Him ; deep they have written the lesson of sacrifice on the Congo mind and on the heart of the Church at home ; and who can say but that even now, in some way unguessed by us, they are still working for Africa ?

The Congo muster roll contains the names of many heroes. To recount them were worth a treatise in itself. One other from the illustrious list claims mention here—William Holman Bentley, the compeer of Grenfell, who while his colleague went far afield quietly sat at Wathen and became an explorer of Congo souls and Congo words, gripping them and mapping them with sure instinct and patience, and doing rare service for all who came after him. Kebentele, the most recent Congo station, has been named in his honour.

X

THE CONGO RIVER.

The Congo has three great stretches, marked off by Stanley Pool on the lower river, and by Stanley Falls on the upper. Seven miles wide at its mouth, its turgid waters can easily be discerned a hundred miles into the sea. One hundred miles inland is Matadi, the base station of the Baptist Missionary Society, and two hundred miles further Kinshasa. Between lie the rapids, and to avoid them the Congo Railway has been built, which makes needless the portage necessary in the early days. Half-way, but further inland to the south, lies Wathen, one of the great missionary outposts of the world, where the Church has made such phenomenal progress that every fourth man is an evangelist. Approximately, therefore, there is on the Lower Congo a mission station every hundred miles.

San Salvador, the ancient capital of Kongo native kings, a cathedral city of early Jesuit missionaries, lies a hundred miles south-east of Matadi; Kibokolo, a hundred miles still east, the centre of a thickly-populated district. Kimpese

and Thysville are mission stations on the railway line.

The Upper Congo has a clear waterway of a thousand miles, with tributaries such as the Mobangi and the Kasai, which are themselves mighty rivers. Two hundred miles along we reach Bolobo, another hundred Lukolela, and still another two hundred Monsembi, "passing as fine a set of cannibals as you would wish to meet anywhere," as one missionary described it. The river, which at first runs between cliffs, flows for the rest of the way between low-lying land clothed with forest to the water's edge. But as we near Upoto, two hundred miles further up, there are highlands which add picturesqueness to the scene. The lowlands soon reappear as we press forward two hundred miles more to Yalembo, and continue during the final hundred to Yakusu, beyond which lie Stanley Falls.

Above the Falls the river is named the Lualaba, which seems to signify "the black river," as Congo means "the gatherer"—names appropriate to them both. Livingstone was certain that the Lualaba as it flowed north was the beginning of the Nile, and he died with that conviction. He never imagined the great bend to the west, nor the mighty influx of waters which transforms it into the

majestic Congo, and opens up Africa to the world. It is with no little satisfaction that we discover work established on this river at Wayika, and have the hope that in the near future the chain of stations may be completed at Mabondo.

There are at least six Protestant missionary societies at work in the immense territory watered by the Congo river. The earliest break in the indifference of the people was at Banza Manteka, under the ministry of Henry Richards. In the reading of the Gospel one of the people asked the missionary what our Lord meant when He said, "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow turn not thou away." The missionary was not prepared with an answer, and asked time for consideration. As he meditated, he was convinced that the words meant just what they said, and when he met the people he told them so. The result that he foresaw was not long delayed. * The people came and borrowed all he possessed, and, acting up to his conviction, he gave them what they demanded. It seemed all very ridiculous. If a literal obedience was to be rendered to this saying, the Congo was the last place to try the experiment. But note the sequel. The chief called his people together and told them that they needed the

white man, and that if they robbed the white man of all his belongings he could not live ; therefore everything that they had taken from him was to be taken back ! The issue was twofold. First, they never borrowed anything of him again, which was itself a blessing. Second, they flocked to hear the teaching of the man who was prepared to lose all in following his own doctrine, and hundreds of them believed unto eternal life. The triumphant Christ was in Africa with His faithful herald, and the conquering Christ is in Africa still.

XI

THE PRICE AND THE PRIZE.

Of course, it costs. The idle dream of Comté, that his religion of humanity would lead at length to a missionary colony in Africa, is as far from fulfilment to-day as when it was dreamed. It needs the constraint of the love of Christ to send such a man as Schweitzer to renounce his position in Europe to devote himself to a savage tribe, and the constraint of the same love is able to change a savage

into one of God's gentlemen. It costs ; but to lay the Congo Railway cost four thousand lives, and of seven hundred African explorers five hundred and fifty have found in Africa their last resting-place. It costs ; but this great continent, large enough to contain Europe, India, China, and Australia combined, is worth a great price. It costs ; but the man of Africa is as dear to Christ as the man of Galilee.

“ The sun can mirror his glorious face
In the dewdrop on the sod,
And the humblest negro heart reflect
The life and love of God.”

In the first Baptist World Congress in London, a negro delegate, Dr. Parrish, speaking for his people, declared that there is no colour in brains, and his statement was cheered to the echo. The enthusiasm of the meeting was, however, somewhat damped when Dr. Henson, the next speaker, who was not a negro, said that he did not agree with his coloured brother, for it was a well-known fact that there is colour in brains, for the part of them that is most useful is grey, and that is a mixture of black and white ! On which there was unanimous congratulation.

"If I die," said Melville Cox, the first Methodist Episcopal missionary to Liberia, who only laboured there five months before he died, "If I die in Africa, you must come and write my epitaph." "But what shall we write?" they asked. "Write, let a thousand fall before Africa is given up," he said.

But the dead apostles no less than the living Christ claim Africa for God. "George," said Elias Thompson to his friend Swan, as he lay dying in Cairo in July, 1901, "I believe that Jesus has called me to lay down my life for Egypt." And during his unconsciousness he repeated again and again, "Crucified for Egypt." When he died, an old man asked: "Why did God send an angel to live among us and take him so quickly away?"

The dead still speak. The author of "A Lone Woman in Africa" tells us how she was sent to the farthest inland station to bring back the missionary and his wife, who lay there ill. Word was sent to the king, and he and his chiefs met for palaver. The missionary stated that he and his wife had been ill most of the year, and that they must get away.

The king rose, and, looking at Miss McAllister, said: "I see that these teachers are sick, and I

know their house is not fit to live in, and we are willing for these people to go for a change and rest, but we are not willing for them to go until you first bring other missionaries. You go and bring us other white people, then you can take them away."

As the king sat down, the people all looked to Miss McAllister for a reply. After a silent prayer for words with which to answer the king, she arose and said : " King, I hear what you have said. You see that these people are not well, and they must leave you ; but although they go, you shall not be left alone. You remember Mr. Garwood was the first missionary sent to you. He came and worked for you, and taught your people, and read the Bible to you, and cared for your sick. After a while, he went to America and was married. He came back and brought his wife, and they were your teachers, and did all they could to teach you God's way. One day he was suddenly drowned. Your people watched the river three days and three nights until you found his body. You took it out of the water and buried it up here on Mission Hill, where it now lies. Now Mr. Garwood is your missionary, and we are not going to take him away. We will leave him with you."

The king and his chiefs were startled, but

Miss McAllister continued : " Yes, when Jesus comes to raise us all out of the ground, Garwood will go up with you, and you won't be able to look in Jesus' face and say, ' We never heard about you,' for Jesus will see Brother Garwood is here, and He will know he told you. Now we are sorry we have not someone else to leave with you. But if a new teacher came, he would read the same book Garwood read, would sing the same hymns, and say the same prayers. Now, you do what Garwood taught you while he was here."

As she sat down, the king arose and said : " Teacher, you talk true. Garwood is our teacher, and we are going to do what he said ; but cannot we have a living teacher, too ? "

This was years ago. Garwood is alone, for no living teacher has ever been sent, but the people do not forget the words which he spake. They tell them to their children, they repeat them to strangers, and point to the Mission Hill, and say : " Yonder on that hill our teacher is sleeping."

* * * *

Christ is in Africa, and He sleeps not. From God's great ebony harp His hand shall yet

evoke the music of the skies, the giant rivers of Africa the strings that shall vibrate to His touch. The Nile shall carry the strain to the North, the Niger shall make vocal His praise to the South, the Zambesi shall bear the jubilant sound to the East ; the Congo shall thrill with its melody on its way West to the wide Atlantic. And all the seas shall listen, and all the continents shall throb with rapture as they hear, the isles shall be glad, and heaven itself shall raise a fuller-throated Hallelujah, when Christ in Africa shall be its unchallenged King.

Printed in Great Britain by
Alexander & Shepheard, Rolls Buildings, Fetter Lane, London, E.C. 4

DATE DUE

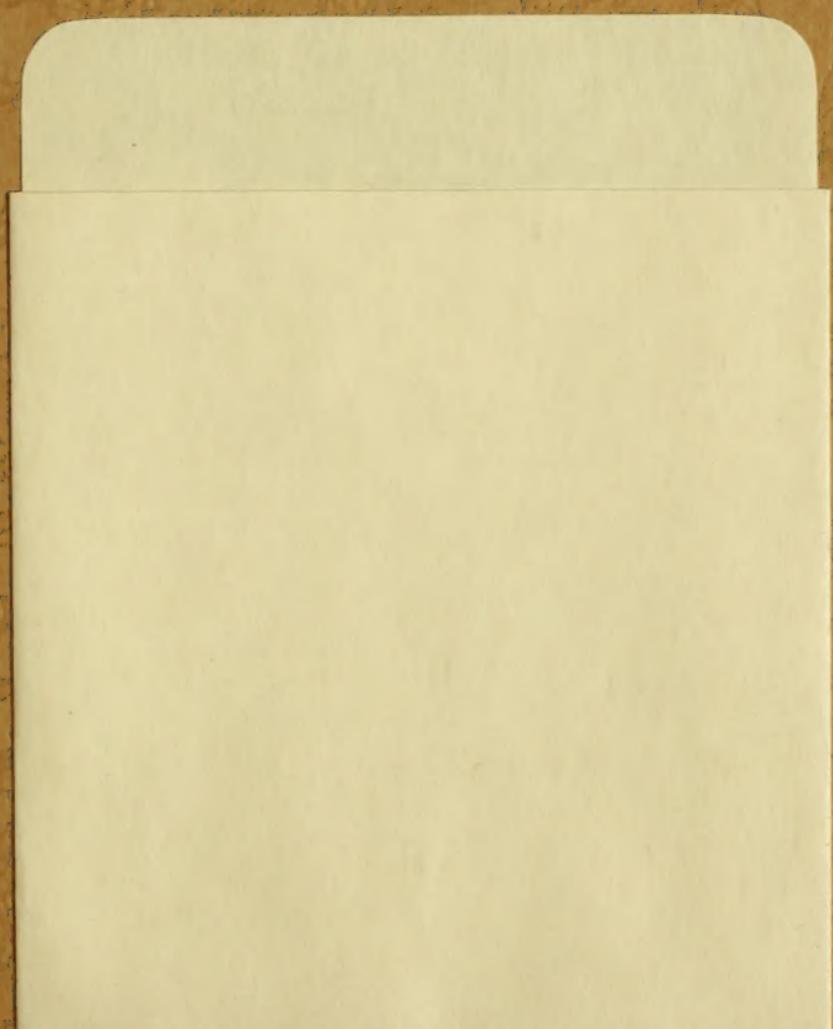
NOV 12

DEC 22

DEC 1968

DEC 29

DEMCO 38-297



Duke University Libraries



D01260952P

D01260952P



Duke- LSC